



Carter & Co. Kick House Censors

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Democrat censorship of House Republicans' constituent mailings has reached Orwellian levels. Republican members of the House Monday night took to the House floor during Special Orders speeches and gave examples of some of the censorship horror stories.

Democrats on the Franking Commission have even gone as far as to object to and censor from one member's communication to constituents a direct quote, in context, from President Obama.

Franking is the process by which Congress, the President and some cabinet members correspond with the public using their signature on the envelope instead of a stamp. The mailings to constituents are limited by budget allotment, and the cost is borne by taxpayer dollars. The commission approves the content of materials to prevent abuse of the privilege. But now it is the commission abusing the process.

The Special Orders hour was led by Rep. John Carter (R-Texas), secretary of the House Republican Conference and a former District Judge. He told the story of the demands of the commission that he remove the words "government run healthcare" and "Democratic majority" from a constituent invitation to a telephone town hall meeting.

"I communicate with my constituents every day," Carter said from the floor.

“One of the tools I use is a telephone town hall meeting. You record a message that leads into the town hall. Part of the message tells the people what you’re going to be talking to them about for the next hour.”

“We made up a telephone town hall recording submission to the Franking Commission in which I proposed to say ‘the Democratic Party is offering their government run healthcare program in the next two weeks and this is what we’re going to talk about tonight,’” Carter continued.

“The Franking Commission came back and told me I could not say ‘government run healthcare’ and I could not say the ‘Democratic Party.’ I had to say ‘the majority party is submitting its public option healthcare program.’ In other words what they’re telling me is that I have to use the same language that the President of the United States uses in his speech or that [House Speaker] Nancy Pelosi uses when she talks about this. ‘Public option.’”

“They have never before in the history of the Republic taken the position that you do not have the right to express your opinion on the policies that are being proposed, or that you must reword the language to suit the policies of someone else,” Carter said.

But there are more examples of the Democrats abuse of the franking approval system. Rep. Kevin Brady (R-Texas) is having his [chart \(pdf\)](#) Republican staff created in the Joint Economic Committee illustrating the structure of Democrat, government run healthcare censored out of some 20 member mailings. But it does not stop there.

Rep. Ken Calvert (R-Calif.) sends a regular newsletter to his constituents. When he attempted to mail a newsletter to his district covering the issue of healthcare, he was forced to remove the following offensive language before Democrats on the commission would approve payment of postage for the mailing:

“The below quote is from President Obama at a recent town hall on health care, responding to a question on possible medical treatment for an elderly woman who had heart problems and received a pacemaker:

‘Look, the first thing for all of us to understand that is we actually have some -- some choices to make about how we want to deal with our own end-of-life care... we as a culture and as a society [can start] to make better decisions within our own families and for ourselves...at least we can let doctors know and your mom know that, you know what? Maybe this isn't going to help. Maybe you're better off not having the surgery, but taking the painkiller.’

I can honestly say I found the President’s quote offensive, as well. But Democrats censored this direct quote in context of the President of the United States of America from an official communication between a member of Congress and his constituents.

Rep. Joe Barton (R-Texas) used the words “Democrat majority” in his newsletter to constituents on the issue of Cap & Trade. Franking kicked it back to Barton saying he had to use the words “congressional majority” instead. Yet found in a Nancy Pelosi newsletter from 2006, when Democrats were in the minority, was the statement, “But too many here and across our nation are paying the price for the Republican Congressional majority’s special interest agenda.”

Barton’s office sent the newsletter back to Franking yesterday with a change in the language: “If we don’t, our nation will end up paying the price for the Democrat Congressional majority’s special interest agenda.” Quoting Pelosi’s 2006 newsletter practically word for word, and sending it to them for reference, Barton’s office is awaiting the response from the commission.

Staffers of one of Carter’s Republican colleagues sent an example to Carter to read from House floor. Not cleared for inclusion by the member before floor action began, the member is referred to as a “Florida colleague.” This member submitted to the Franking Commission for review and approval a letter to business owners the week of July 13th. Democrats found this language objectionable:

“The bill imposes a new payroll tax on employers who do not provide their employees with insurance.”

Democrats demanded they change it to read:

“In my opinion, the bill imposes a new payroll tax on employers who do not provide their employees with insurance.”

The problem with that instruction is that the bill’s imposition of a new payroll tax is not an opinion. It’s a fact. The “Florida Colleague’s” office pointed out the fact, as stated in black and white on page 150 of their own bill. The commission relented -- but only after delaying the valid communication between this member and constituents for several days.

House Democrats are engaging in a gross abuse of power by censoring the ability of Republicans to communicate the facts to their constituents in a timely manner.

“If they take away free speech from members of Congress, when will they take it away from the press?” Carter asked from the House floor. “When will they take it away from the people?”

The censorship is not limited to franked mail privileges. Last week, House Republicans planned to speak during their Monday leadership Special Orders hour on House Speaker Nancy Pelosi’s refusal to help secure the release of CIA briefing logs that would disprove or substantiate her accusations that the CIA lied to Congress about harsh interrogation methods used on terrorists we had captured.

House Democrats abruptly voted to adjourn instead of allowing for the traditional Special Orders speeches at the conclusion of business. Democrats did not attempt this same maneuver last night after Republicans threatened to deliver the censorship speeches outside on the Capitol steps.

Rumors that Speaker Pelosi had demanded her staff prepare a “Newspeak” dictionary for her next press conference were unconfirmed as we go to press.